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ABSTRACT

In this issue on admissions in colleges and universities, the history of the admissions process and trends are outlined, and the current situation of declining enrollments reviewed. The place of testing is discussed briefly, and other factors in selection listed: student background (educational, extracurricular, and ethnic), and student personality and goals. Questions of bias in testing are outlined, and the discovery and use of new criteria and new tests discussed. Research on scientific creativity--problem-solving ability--suggests that traditional multiple-choice items on the Graduate Record Examination, for example, should be supplemented with items such as free-response questions. Research into medical diagnostic competence is being used to develop new measures for medical school admissions, and the Educational Testing Service is currently developing a test for business schools that would recognize a student's ability to deal with people. A national survey is cited to show that even today standardized tests are not the single most important criterion for college admission, and a summary of the selection factors used in public, private, competitive, and noncompetitive colleges is presented. (MSE)

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FOCUS

A NEW ERA IN ADMISSIONS

Educational Testing Service

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Each issue of FOCUS discusses a critical aspect of education today and the work Educational Testing Service is doing to help cope with it. Most widely known for standardized tests, ETS is also the nation's largest nonprofit educational research organization. Its 2,400 staff members apply the tools of the social sciences to the problems of minority students, access to higher education, human development, occupational certification, and many other areas that demand attention.

Photos by Cliff Moore

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A NEW ERA IN ADMISSIONS

by Leslie Aldridge Westoff

The Rapidly Changing Scene

Each year in the United States, about half of the more than three million high school graduates engage in a national ritual of filling out college applications. Those bound for less competitive or open-door institutions may brood over which college to go to, but in most cases they know their acceptance will be pretty automatic.

Those headed for competitive colleges, however, become frantically involved in making numerous applications, in interviewing, discussing, test-taking, worrying, and waiting — for the dreaded rejections, or hoped for acceptances. For them it is a time of crisis.

It wasn't always this way. In 1841 the student body at the University of Michigan totalled seven, and the admissions process there was much less complex. Nearly a century before that the entrance requirements to Harvard, Yale, and the College of New Jersey (later to become Princeton) were each different, but all plainly spelled out. A student simply had to know his Greek and Latin. Princeton's regulations read:

> None may expect to be admitted into the College but such as being examined by the President and Tutors, shall be found able to render Virgil and Tully's orations into English and to turn English into true and grammatical Latin: and be so well acquainted with the Greek as to render any part of the four Evangelists in that language into Latin or English and to give the grammatical construction of the words.

In the 1880s, students who wanted to attend a college had to travel to its campus to take its own special set of entrance exams. The trouble was that each college prescribed different readings from the classical curriculum. And so to do well, a student had to pick a preparatory school that pointed toward the entrance exam of the college of his choice. If he wasn't selected, he was out of luck. His studies had not prepared him for any other college's exam.

In 1900 a new system came into being, one that allowed students to defer their choice of college until they were ready to apply. A dozen or so colleges came together and agreed to standardize the studies they expected of the well-prepared applicant and to give a common set of exams. The college application process immediately became less confusing for both student and institution.

To oversee the system, a College Entrance Examination Board was created, designed to help the colleges do in common what each had done separately — prepare and grade these exams. Since then the system has evolved to include the Scholastic Aptitude Test and Achievement Tests in various subjects. Introduced in 1926, the SAT now measures verbal and mathematic reasoning ability, and continues to be designed as independently as possible of any special curriculum. The College Board — an association of more than 2,000 institutions — still brings high school teachers together with college faculty to prepare its achievement exams, and contracts with Educational Testing Service to prepare and administer the tests.

This process, designed to help the placement of students in 3,000 colleges annually, has evolved rapidly during

the last decade. But now a multiplicity of forces seem destined to bring about new pressures. It is becoming apparent that insuring equality of opportunity demands a realignment of priorities. New legal, social and moral forces continue to impinge on the admissions process. Students now sue universities over admissions decisions, and admissions programs and processes have twice been before the Supreme Court. Higher education now appears to be changing more rapidly than ever in response to the needs and desires of society.

"Today's applicants are going to college in a buyer's market, and admissions offices are competing not only for the best students, but for enough students."

The Falling Numbers

And there are other forces at work transforming society; for instance, demographic changes. Those born during the post-World War II baby boom are almost beyond college age, and the 18-year-old population is about to shrink. The number of people applying to college is expected to dwindle and cause devastation among many of the smaller colleges. Some colleges have already been forced to close; others are barely holding on. The small liberal arts college may be an endangered species. There is concern, as well, among the large nonselective colleges, where publicly funded budgets are tied to enrollment.

One admissions officer was heard to say, "I pray every night when I go to bed that two or three institutions will close, and then we'll have more students."

For a number of reasons — including the desire for quality in a time of inflation — the most highly selective institutions continue to be deluged with applicants. Competition at these colleges and universities is fiercer than ever. But many of the less selective colleges are resorting to sophisticated marketing tactics to stay solvent. Today's applicants are going to college in a buyer's market, and admissions offices are competing not only for the best students, but for enough students.

They are looking for the nontraditional student: the older woman, the foreign student, the continuing education student, housewives, part-time students. And most are looking for new ways of packaging education — summer programs, branch campuses, special programs, mini-semesters — to generate income. As ETS Director of Program Research Warren Willingham describes it, colleges moved, in the mid-'60s, through an Era of Meritocracy, then through an Egalitarian Era in the late '60s and early '70s. With higher education still much impressed by these desirable values, he sees the present and immediate future as a likely Era of Pragmatism.

To Test or Not to Test

Tests have always been a part of the college admissions process. A combination of grade-point averages and SAT scores has been found to be the best predictor of scholastic success in the freshman year, and probably all four years, though not necessarily of career success. Without tests, it is likely that the logistics of admitting the millions that apply to higher institutions would hopelessly bog down.

What grades and scores do best for the admissions officers is to help identify the brilliant students at the top and the dull ones at the bottom. However, they are not

always sufficient to focus in on the crowd in the middle and pick those with potential.

Since the early 1970s, for a variety of reasons — including the need to be fair, to repair educational injustices, to aid minorities, to keep government and the courts out of education, to justify taking nontraditional students in a time of economic crunch, and to choose students who will remain for four years — those in admissions have made a more concerted effort to broaden the spectrum of information about applicants so they can make more informed decisions.

There is a bouillabaisse of ingredients that have always been important, but are increasingly relevant: biographical material, talents, achievements, athletic accomplishments, outside work, goals, character, and barriers of language, background, or education. Admissions officers, more than ever, are making a concerted effort to scrutinize these factors in addition to the numbers that make up class rank, grades, and test scores.

"It is probable that the real reasons for racial differences in test performance stem from deprived family backgrounds, economic hardship, and inadequate elementary and secondary school systems."

The Question of Bias

It has often been asserted that admissions tests are biased in favor of the white majority and that, because of previous cultural experience, a minority student will not be able to do as well on them. Although it is true that black and Hispanic students do not score, on the average, as well as

white students, research has failed to reveal test-related reasons. Previous instances of bias which were discovered — and removed — resulted from regional or urban-rural differences rather than racial or ethnic ones. It is probable that the real reasons for racial differences in test performance stem from deprived family backgrounds, economic hardship, and inadequate elementary and secondary school systems. Many schools lack funds and people to deal with difficult classroom situations, and are turning out graduates, many of them poor and black, who are ill-prepared for college.

New Criteria, New Tests

If colleges are to continue to judge students in increasingly diverse ways, enlarging the number and scope of the factors on which decisions are made, they will need new methods of comparison. Can creativity, ambition, or judgment be reliably measured? New tests and applications are being developed at ETS which may help tap those inner qualities that help us eventually to succeed or fail in whatever careers we choose.

As Warren Willingham has said, we must "persuade ourselves that not only grades are important, that we need measures with more real-life qualities that are less abstract; that we need measures that are more open-ended and tests that are more responsive to effort, and reward achievement; that we need measures that are more relevant to careers; that we need tests that will tell people more about themselves." He and ETS psychologist Hunter Breland are involved in discovering the connection between personal qualities and academic and other kinds of success. For this Personal Qualities Project, 25,000 entering freshmen at nine private colleges filled out a "personal qualities" question-

naire in the fall of 1979. After reading thousands of applications, admissions staff and faculty have produced a spectrum of 20 qualities that seem important in relation to objectives of the college. In addition, more than 100 separate student characteristics — such as work experience, leadership, community activities, and special talents — are being coded and rated. The study, supported by the College Board and ETS, will end in 1983 when the 1979 freshmen will be questioned again as seniors.

Willingham hopes this project will contribute "concrete evidence that personal qualities are a valid and valuable supplement to academic measures in anticipating student accomplishments." He also hopes to develop practical advice as to which personal qualities are likely to be valid as predictors of particular kinds of success, to gather information about the varied strengths of different types of students, and to find a basis for assessing student goals and improving student retention.

Another ETS psychologist, Leonard Baird, is developing an Inventory for Graduate Admissions by asking first-year students in 10 graduate schools for a comprehensive list of personal achievements. Students are followed up a year later to see if their inventories predicted their performance better than grades, and whether they have shown what most professors would say are the signs of good professional development: writing an article, doing an independent experiment, or taking on a research assistantship.

Scientific Creativity

ETS psychologists Norman Frederiksen and William Ward have developed several new tests of scientific thinking, with funding from the Graduate Record Examinations Board. The tests are intended to elicit some of the same kinds of problem-solving activities as are required of a re-

"... New tests of scientific thinking (being developed) ... are intended to elicit some of the same kinds of problem-solving activities as are required of a researcher in his or her work."

searcher in his or her work. For example, in one of the tests, Formulating Hypotheses, the student is given a brief description of a research study, a table or graph showing the principal results, and a statement of the major finding. The task is to write the hypothesis that best explains the results, as well as other hypotheses that should be considered in interpreting the data or planning further investigations. Scores are obtained reflecting the quality, the number, and the rarity of solutions offered. One score, the number of ideas that are both unusual and of high quality, may perhaps be interpreted as a measure of creativity in problem solving.

In a recent study, the researchers compared two versions of the Formulating Hypotheses test — a free-response form, in which the student is required to write his or her own answers, and a machine-scorable (multiple-choice) version, in which a set of alternatives must be evaluated and ranked. They found that somewhat different abilities were needed for performance on the two forms of the test. Moreover, they found evidence that scores on the open-ended version of the test can predict aspects of first-year graduate performance that are not well predicted by the current Graduate Record Examinations — in particular, such activities as carrying out an independent research project and authoring a scientific paper, as well as similar indications of early professional accomplishment.

Frederiksen and Ward conclude that information can be obtained from free-response tests that cannot be obtained from parallel problems presented in multiple-choice form. To measure all aspects of ability that are important in

graduate admissions, it may prove necessary to supplement conventional test items with new kinds of problems presented in nontraditional formats.

Medical School Admissions

Grades and tests currently used in medical school admissions are effective in predicting who will do well in academic work, but not in predicting success in clinical activities later in training. Norman Frederiksen, William Ward, and Sybil Carlson, in collaboration with the National Board of Medical Examiners and a consortium of 13 medical schools are working to develop new measures for use in medical school selection.

In a study supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, they have developed tests which do not need any special technical knowledge, yet appear to use some of the same abilities involved in solving medical diagnostic problems. For example, one test requires the student to discover why some of the hemlock trees in a hedge are dying. At each of several stages, the student is given further information about the situation, and then is asked to propose possible reasons or to list the additional items of information he or she would like to obtain. The result is a range of scores, including measures of the student's ability to generate diagnostic hypotheses and to use information in modifying them. Scores will be compared with those on diagnostic tests taken by advanced medical students, to determine whether it is possible to predict medical problem-solving from exams which can be given at the time of selection for medical school.

In a related study funded by the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, researchers are examining the interpersonal skills involved in interviewing patients. Advanced medical students interview 10 people, five of whom present medical problems, and five nonmedical problems. The latter group

includes, for example, an undergraduate student who is interested in obtaining advice about whether to apply to medical school. Here the interest is in determining whether medical students show similarities in their skills and styles of interviewing across medical and nonmedical situations. If such relations are found, the abilities demonstrated in nonmedical interviews could be considered as additional information for use in selecting a student for admission to medical school.

Business Competence

The desire to look beyond grades and scores before making admissions decisions has also extended to graduate business schools. The Graduate Management Admission Council, which represents admissions officers in graduate

business schools, asked ETS to develop a test that would recognize a student's ability to deal with others. In response, ETS psychologist Lawrence Stricker has devised an experimental measure of interpersonal competence in college seniors applying to business school.

In this test (currently being tried out on a small scale), business situations are dramatized on a TV screen, and questions are asked about what has been seen. The viewer is told to pretend he or she is a manager facing subordinates who come in with various kinds of problems. The student listens to each problem and either replies to the subordinate by talking into a tape recorder or writing judgments about the important features of the situation.

In one problem a woman who works in the filing department says she has learned that her supervisor is planning to leave and she wants to be considered for the job. What does the student say to her? "Let's discuss it further?" "Let's see who else is interested?" And what does the student think are the main things to be considered: The subordinate's eagerness? Her feelings? Her record? The effectiveness of the replies and the accuracy of the judgments are then rated by business school experts.

A Survey Of What's What

But for now, graduate schools and undergraduate institutions must still rely on the more traditional selection tools: grades, test scores, interviews, essays, and letters of recommendation. In order to discover the elements of current admissions practice, the College Board and the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) surveyed all institutions of higher learning during 1978-79. Usable responses were received from 56 percent, or 1,463, of the colleges and universities.

Among the facts gleaned from 52 volumes of computer output, the two most noteworthy are that test scores are not the single most important factor in college admissions decisions, and that it is not as difficult to get into college as some people have assumed. Following are some of the other results for four-year institutions:

Public and Private

- *Freshman applicants:* Almost 80 percent of the applicants to public and private colleges and universities are accepted, a rate higher than is commonly believed.
- *Admission test scores,* such as the ACT or SAT, are re-

> " Almost 80 percent of the (freshman) applicants to public and private colleges and universities are accepted. "

quired of all applicants by 66 percent of public and 74 percent of private institutions; 30 percent of the colleges have minimum standards for combined verbal and math SAT scores; average minimum scores (out of a possible perfect combined score of 1600) are 740 at public and 754 at private institutions. Achievement tests are required of all applicants by only four percent of public and 17 percent of private colleges.

- *Interviews* with staff or alumni were required of all applicants in only one percent of public and 18 percent of private colleges.
- *A personal essay* or autobiographical statement is required of all students in 10 percent of public and 45 percent of private colleges.
- *Letters of recommendation* are required of all students in seven percent of public and 63 percent of private colleges.

Competitive and Non-Competitive

- *The ACT or SAT* is required of all applicants in more than 70 percent of competitive, selective institutions; and about 30 percent of the noncompetitive, open-door colleges, which generally use high school graduation as the only requirement.
- *Personal essays* or autobiographies are required of all applicants in 33 percent of selective colleges and five percent of open-door colleges.
- *Interviews* are required of all applicants in 13 percent of selective colleges and six percent of open-door colleges.

(In general, the more selective the institution, the more emphasis is placed on the personal and subjective side of an application as well as on test scores; a not-too-surprising finding, since high grades and test scores are the norm for applicants at highly selective colleges.)

As to how institutions use admission tests, only a few percent indicated that a student's SAT or ACT score was the single most important factor in a decision to admit or not admit the student. One-third of the selective colleges said the scores were only "one of several factors." However, 57 percent of the selective institutions and 15 percent of the open-door colleges rated these scores as "a very important factor." Overall, in terms of weighted importance, high school grades and rank in class were seen as more important than test scores.

But scores are, and will probably continue to be, significant. About two-thirds of the colleges said test scores are as important today as in 1970, and three-quarters said they felt they would remain important in the 1980s, though how they are used may well change.

Uncovering Princeton's Formula

There are wide variations in admissions practices from the highly selective college to the open admission state school. According to James Wickenden, director of admissions at Princeton University, which is highly selective, the formula is straightforward: Fifty percent of the decision is based on academic credentials and 50 percent on nonacademic factors.

The academic half is evaluated by considering the SAT verbal and math scores, achievement test scores, recommendations, and grades and rank in high school class. The nonacademic rating takes into account leadership activities, sports, and other school activities such as newspapers, yearbooks, clubs, and student government.

The personal interview helps assess the nonacademic side of the applicant. "If a student were dull, or scared or inarticulate," says Wickenden, "I would probably discount it. But if he or she were obnoxious, talked all the time, showed little sensitivity, that might bother me."

In addition, special attention is given to those who are in certain categories: prospective engineers, athletes, minorities, and alumni and faculty children. An alumni child, says Wickenden, has twice the chance of being admitted as other applicants. "We took 45 percent of those who applied," he said, "but only 20 percent of all others."

Wickenden agreed that the SAT is useful as the only index that cuts across all applicants. "It's the one unifying measure. But we also place an enormous emphasis on the quality of the secondary school; the more we know it, the less emphasis we place on the SAT. If the student is from a school unfamiliar to us, we look more closely at the SAT."

But even a prestige institution with many more applicants than places needs to work to maintain the diversity it values among its students. More now than perhaps ever before, a high test score is no guarantee of an offer of admission. The class of 1983 numbers about 1,130 students including 44 with total test scores below 450. (They would have to be unusually high in nonacademic qualities.) To select such students may appear unusual, but by looking at the entire context of an applicant, institutions like Princeton can make unusual choices and options are increased all around. At most selective institutions there is a continuing interest in accepting some number of students who seem remarkable or exhibit potential, even if their grades and scores are not the best, since they may contribute to the diversity of campus life.

"More now than perhaps ever before, a high test score is no guarantee of an offer of admission."

At the opposite end of the scale of selectivity is a place like Ohio State University. There the undergraduate student body numbers 40,000, with about 9,000 freshmen. Any state resident who is a graduate of an accredited Ohio high school is automatically accepted. Out-of-state students are admitted according to a simple formula which includes high school grade-point average (at least 2.5), and either an ACT score of at least 21 or a combined minimum verbal and math SAT score of 950. The admissions office looks at the non-academic records of out-of-state applicants only if they are borderline. Normally there are no interviews. But one will be arranged for the out-of-state student who feels the record does not completely demonstrate potential.

According to admissions director Jim Mager, even a large university like Ohio State is concerned with a future of declining enrollments, and there are plans to canvas the state drumming up business at high schools. "We're not trying to pull people in with a hook," said Mager, "but we want to inform them so they make an intelligent choice. We also want to increase the likelihood that those who come to the university will stay."

The Crisis Of Numbers

But while the selective institutions are worrying about diversity and excellence (and how to say "no" to increasing numbers of applicants), and while large state universities figure out how to keep their high enrollments, the less selective institutions and many of the small liberal arts colleges are moving toward a state of crisis. For these it is becoming increasingly hard to fill classes, and many on the edge will topple. The situation is perhaps even more acute for the nation's 105 traditionally black colleges and universities. According to Dr. Mary Williams of the Institute for

"... 1978 enrollment in (black colleges & universities) was down six percent from the previous year and there was a 13 percent decline in the number of entering freshmen."

Services to Education, 1978 enrollment in these institutions was down six percent from the previous year and there was a 13 percent decline in the number of entering freshmen (compared with less than one percent in both categories for all schools).

These signs are part of a larger trend. In the 1960s undergraduate enrollment doubled to four million, and total enrollment in higher and professional education rose to more than 8.5 million.

But the annual double-digit enrollment growth of the '60s shrank to two to four percent annually during most of the '70s. While it is now declining, much of the modest growth in the '70s can be attributed to an influx of older students.

The plain fact is that the United States has almost passed through the postwar baby boom in the college-age population, and between 1980 and 1990 the decrease in this age group will be about 15 percent. The drop during the first half of the coming decade alone will be about 10 percent. By 1985, census data show there will be 1.7 million fewer 18-to-21 year-olds than in 1980, and by 1995 the college-age population is expected to drop to 13 million, almost a 25 percent decline from the 1979 peak of 17 million.

In response to preliminary results from the College Board/AACRAO survey, 35 percent of the colleges said they expect to grow by the mid-1980s, 55 percent expect to stay the same, and only 10 percent expect their enrollments to drop. Says College Board Vice President Jim Nelson, "Admissions directors believe that *they* will be okay. It's the other colleges down the street that will suffer. The demographic statistics show many of them are not facing the future realistically." He says it is the colleges that have never done enrollment projections or marketing studies that remain the most optimistic. Colleges that have done their homework are the most realistic in their planning.

In his study of what colleges can expect, ETS psychologist John Centra finds that regional population shifts also have a lot to do with a college's future. Continued population growth in the South and West, he says, would mean a larger college-age population in those places and less in other parts of the country.

The American Council on Education (ACE) forecasts that 11 states will experience decreases in enrollment: Arkansas, Connecticut, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, and Pennsyl-

vania. These states enroll almost 30 percent of college freshmen. Other factors in the loss of students include the rising interest in vocational education, because college degrees are less likely than in the past to get them the jobs they want, and the mounting costs of a college education.

Marketing Education

The response of some private colleges to the impending doom has been to resort to questionable tactics. A recent study by the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education reports that some colleges are engaging in un-

ethical and possibly illegal activities. They are, among other things, admitting unqualified foreign students who scarcely know English (75 foreign students were recently stranded here when financially failing Windham College in Vermont recruited them in a last-minute attempt at survival, and then went under); not providing adequate advising, financial aid, placement services for students; and using misleading advertising.

Colleges in trouble, says the report, have opened branch campuses, often without full-time faculty trained in the subjects they were teaching. Some had no library and required no thesis for an advanced degree. Some put out inaccurate or incomplete catalogs. The Carnegie Council study of catalogs for 1975 from 200 four-year colleges and universities found that 81 percent failed to mention whether courses were taught by faculty or graduate students, and 72 percent did not state whether the course was currently offered.

A declining student population combined with other factors can lead to institutional desperation. Since the 1940s a few colleges have always used advertising to broadcast their presence. But many more now have started to do so. Colleges that need students have begun to advertise by television and radio, disposable 45 RPM records, slide shows, newspapers, and magazines. According to the Council, some ads describe institutions in an excessively positive light, include out-of-date information, show pictures of students working with scientific equipment not available to them, and strongly suggest that a certain program will unfailingly lead to employment.

In more than one case the report noted that money changed hands questionably: colleges offered to pay bonuses to high school guidance counselors who sent students their way; some admissions officers received commissions based on the number of students they enrolled; and bribes from willing parents were accepted.

Admissions and recruitment practices among some colleges became so problematic that in 1979, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, the College Board, the National Association of College Admissions Counselors, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals drew up a code of behavior in an effort to halt dishonest and unprofessional practices.

The Benefits of Acceptable Marketing

Many colleges, however, advertise and promote themselves in perfectly acceptable ways. For example, three Ohio institutions — Ohio Wesleyan, Kenyon, and Denison — put out a cooperative brochure suggesting that students visit or apply. They have joined forces to fight competition and attract students to their campuses.

And as part of a general marketing campaign, a number of colleges use the College Board's Student Search Service, in operation since 1972. When registered for the SAT, students who wish to participate provide background information on themselves and later receive information directly from colleges. Many highly selective colleges use this service to ferret out bright students who live in out-of-

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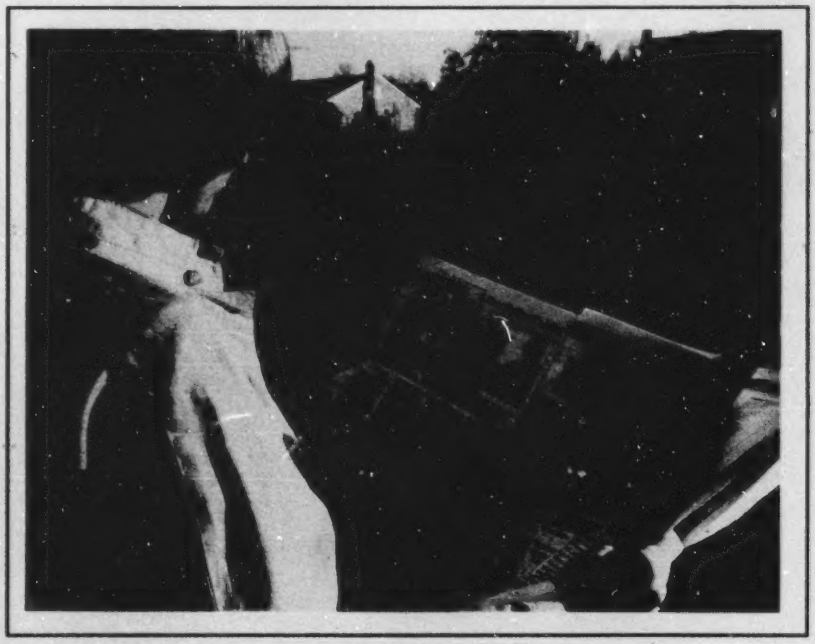
the-way places. Brown University, for instance, automatically contacts everyone with SAT scores over 650 in selected zip code areas, many of them urban ghettos.

Jan Harvey, program administrator for the Student Search Service at ETS, reports that nearly one thousand colleges use the service, and over one million students give permission for their names and addresses to be sent to inquiring colleges looking for students with certain characteristics.

The Future of Admissions

"One of the biggest challenges of the next decade," says Warren Willingham, "will be to maintain an appropriate emphasis on educational values as colleges adjust to difficult



demographic and economic changes." He believes colleges must continue to stress intellectual and educational values and resist indiscriminate competition for students.

One solution may be to invest more thought into the fit between the college and the individual, so that the student is more likely to remain for the four years and develop effectively as an individual. As Willingham notes, admission is not just a matter of selection, but who the college attracts, who accepts, who stays after the first year, and who graduates. Across the nation, only half the women and 61 percent of the men who entered college as freshmen in 1971 were seniors in 1974. That is a net loss of thousands of students, though many of these students may plan to return to college later on.

The makeup of the student body is likely to change. A 1976 study by ETS researcher Rex Jackson shows that more than 80 percent of academically able high school graduates from families with annual incomes over $25,500 go on to college. Colleges that need students to maintain current levels of enrollment may have to look to lower income students who, on the average, are less well prepared academically. Thus colleges will need not only to provide financial aid, but remedial programs to help students improve their basic academic skills, a need which some colleges have already recognized.

Marketing and advertising efforts will doubtless continue. But delivery on advertised promises in the face of possible legal sanctions will be a key factor. Along with the declining college-age population, a relatively weak job market is predicted. The International Labor Office has projected a surplus of 950,000 graduates for the jobs available in the U.S. through 1985. With higher costs, inflation and recession, many students are lured by vocational and business schools and the armed forces. Some colleges have already closed. Many are likely to follow. But there may be other choices, and the effect may not be totally negative.

"It is likely there will be more mergers among colleges and more cooperative arrangements," notes Centra. "Many will have to reduce their size and consolidate their strengths. But many will have a chance to improve the education they offer once they stabilize their student body at some workable level."

As admissions officers become part of this future, they may need to increase their expertise and resources. A wider net with broader sets of criteria will demand more staff, new directions, new guidelines to give form to new admissions practices. ETS senior vice president Winton H. Manning has formulated his own list of Principles of Good Practice in Admissions. Three of those principles are:

- Selection criteria used by institutions should represent a reasonably broad array of qualities rather than relying solely upon a single index of competence derived from ability tests and grades.

- Whatever admissions criteria are used, the educational institution should routinely allow applicants to demonstrate that there may be areas not covered by these particular criteria and standards.

- Upon request, a rejected applicant should be given a statement of the reason(s) for his or her rejection, and a means of appeal.

As admissions officers seek to implement such ideas, they will more and more often be looking at the whole person rather than merely scores, grades, and ranks, useful as they are.

While there has never been a single best way of matching individual and institution, the new variety of different ways, different attitudes, the new openness, will permit each student to seek a form of personalized assessment that is sensitive to his or her needs and styles. A fresh, more imaginative approach to admissions is taking over.

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